

once again come together and work together to pass another round of help. We have done it before, and we did it when case counts were far lower than they are now.

We need to summon the same sense of urgency, and we must come together at the end of this week and pass meaningful bipartisan and comprehensive COVID relief. We must prove to the American people that bipartisan negotiation is not a relic of the past.

As I talk to Michigianians each and every day, the message is very clear. They want us to put partisan politics aside and solve the very real challenges confronting our country.

Finding common ground and bringing people together has always been my approach to serving Michigan and the people of this Nation. This past year, I am proud to say, we worked together to advance legislation on priorities that not only addressed the pandemic but also tackled issues facing Michigianians and people across this country each and every day.

On a bipartisan basis, we have been able to pass legislation out of Congress on a number of topics, whether it has been expanding apprenticeship opportunities for veterans, closing loopholes that pose a threat to our national security, saving taxpayer dollars, protecting the Great Lakes, which is one of our Nation's most precious natural resources, hiring more agricultural inspectors at our Nation's ports of entry, or improving the Department of Veterans Affairs caregiver program.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their partnership with me in advancing these priorities. I know there is no shortage of differences among us, but when we put personal politics aside and focus on addressing the problem at hand, I know we can get results.

As we enter this next session of Congress, I am hopeful that we can build on some of the progress we have made. Whether it is supporting small businesses, lowering prescription drug costs, ensuring our Nation remains a global leader in innovation, or getting through this public health and economic crisis, there is much more that can be done in the next Congress when we are all willing to reach across the aisle to find lasting solutions.

Two years ago, I delivered George Washington's Farewell Address on the Senate floor. It is an annual tradition here in the Senate. In that address, President Washington warned of the dangers of tribalism and political polarization in our country. We cannot forget President Washington's message, particularly during these uncertain and daunting times. We cannot let polarization prevent us from doing the people's work. Let us build on that spirit of bipartisanship. Let us work together to get things done. Our constituents demand it.

This week, we can again work in a bipartisan way to pass a COVID relief

bill that makes a difference to everyone suffering from this pandemic.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON SOMERS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Somers nomination?

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 43, as follows:

(Rollcall Vote No. 274 Ex.)

YEAS—52

Alexander	Graham	Romney
Barraso	Grassley	Rounds
Blackburn	Hawley	Rubio
Blunt	Hoeven	Sasse
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Braun	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Burr	Johnson	Shelby
Capito	Kelly	Sinema
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sullivan
Collins	Lankford	Tester
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	McConnell	Tillis
Cramer	Moran	Toomey
Crapo	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Cruz	Paul	Wicker
Daines	Portman	Young
Ernst	Risch	
Gardner	Roberts	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Jones	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Udall
Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Wyden
Feinstein	Murray	
Gillibrand	Peters	

NOT VOTING—5

Enzi	Harris	Perdue
Fischer	Loeffler	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in

a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am here on the floor today to talk again about the need for us to pass a legislative package, which I would call an emergency package, to deal with our COVID-19 crisis we have in this country.

As we talk today on the floor of the Senate, there are negotiators working busily in a room nearby to try to come up with that package, and that is a good thing. I know they have run into some roadblocks, at least so I have been told. We need to work through those roadblocks. They are relatively small compared to the importance of the overall mission of helping the people we represent, helping those small businesses, helping those hospitals, helping those families who find themselves without a paycheck through no fault of their own. And my hope is that we can get there.

The legislation that is being looked at today, which may be part of a larger package that we will vote on either tomorrow or the next day, is, as I understand it, informed by work that a bipartisan group of us did over the past several weeks. I appreciate my colleagues so much. I see Senator MURKOWSKI is here on the floor today. She was one of those people. Senator MANCHIN was one of the people to help organize it. In fact, I think the first meeting was because LISA MURKOWSKI invited people to have pizza at her place. And that resulted in a very positive interaction between Democrats and Republicans on a lot of detail, a lot of specific issues, to be able to put together a package that will help our country right now to work through this crisis.

I wish I could say that things are better. But when I look at my own home State of Ohio, I see just the opposite. In fact, over the past few weeks, we have had weekly cases that have increased, not decreased. Our number of daily new cases is averaging around 10,000 a day now every day. That is double what it was just a month ago. At least in my State, the coronavirus crisis has increased, not decreased.

By the same token, the economic crisis that is a result of the COVID-19 crisis has continued to grow. We have seen people who have lost their jobs because their restaurant doesn't have any business, not because there is a government edict; although, there are in some States. Some States have said you have to shut down. Some States have gone so far as to say you have to shut down outdoor dining, not just indoor dining. Of course, those people have lost their jobs.

In many cases, it is just because the virus is so prevalent, people aren't